## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-23 (Cancelled)

24. (New) Inerting method for extinguishing a fire in a closed room ("target area") in which an oxygen content in the closed room is reduced within a given time (x) to a specific inerting level, wherein:

said inerting level is kept to a certain level within a given regulation range, in particular a re-ignition prevention level (R);

said inerting level corresponds to said re-ignition prevention level (R);

an upper threshold of oxygen content in the regulation range is smaller than or, at maximum, equal to said re-ignition prevention level (R);

the time (x) for lowering the oxygen content to said inerting level is preset; and the time (x) for lowering the oxygen content to said inerting level is selected depending on a base inertization level at a time a flooding begins.

- 25. (New) Inerting method in accordance with Claim 24, wherein an amplitude of the oxygen content in the regulation range has a height of approximately 0.2% by volume.
- 26. (New) Inerting method in accordance with Claim 24, wherein the regulating of said oxygen content for lowering said oxygen content to said inerting level and/or for keeping said oxygen content at said re-ignition prevention level (R) is performed by taking into account said air exchange rate of the target area and/or a pressure difference between the target area and the environment.
- 27. (New) Inerting method in accordance with Claim 25, wherein the regulating of said oxygen content for lowering said oxygen content to said inerting level and/or for keeping said oxygen content at said re-ignition prevention level (R) is performed by taking into account an air exchange rate of the target area and/or a pressure difference between the target area and the environment.

- 28. (New) Inerting method in accordance with Claim 24, wherein a calculating of an amount of extinguishing agent for lowering said oxygen content to said inerting level and/or for keeping said oxygen content at said re-ignition prevention level (R) is performed by taking into account an air exchange rate of the target area and/or a pressure difference between the target area and the environment.
- 29. (New) Inerting method in accordance with Claim 26, wherein a calculating of an amount of extinguishing agent for lowering said oxygen content to the inerting level and/or for keeping said oxygen content at said re-ignition prevention level (R) is performed by taking into account the air exchange rate of the target area and/or the pressure difference between the target area and the environment.
- 30. (New) Inerting method in accordance with Claim 26, wherein the air exchange rate of the target area corresponds to an  $n_{50}$  value of the target area.
- 31. (New) Inerting method in accordance with Claim 24 in which lowering said oxygen content ensues by means of feeding an oxygen-displacing gas into the target area, wherein a regulating of a supply of the oxygen-displacing gas is performed by taking into account an air/gas pressure in the target area.
- 32. (New) Inerting method in accordance with Claim 26 in which lowering said oxygen content ensues by means of feeding an oxygen-displacing gas into the target area, wherein a regulating of a supply of the oxygen-displacing gas is performed by taking into account an air/gas pressure in the target area.
- 33. (New) Inerting method in accordance with Claim 24 in which lowering said oxygen content ensues by means of feeding an oxygen-displacing gas into the target area, wherein a regulating of a supply of the oxygen-displacing gas for lowering the oxygen content to said inerting level and/or for maintaining said oxygen content is performed by taking into account the base inertization level at the time the flooding begins.

- 34. (New) Inerting method in accordance with Claim 24 in which lowering said oxygen content ensues by means of feeding an oxygen-displacing gas into the target area, wherein a regulating of a supply of the oxygen-displacing gas is performed by taking into account either said current oxygen content or the current oxygen-displacing gas concentration, in the target area.
- 35. (New) Inerting method in accordance with Claim 24 in which lowering said oxygen content ensues by means of feeding an oxygen-displacing gas into the target area, wherein a regulating of a supply of the oxygen-displacing gas is performed by taking into account said oxygen content prior to beginning the lowering of said oxygen content to the specific inerting level.
- 36. (New) Inerting method in accordance with Claim 31, wherein the regulating of the supply of the oxygen-displacing gas is performed according to a specific flooding progress pattern.
- 37. (New) Inerting method in accordance with Claim 24, wherein said oxygen content in the target area is lowered by introduction of an oxygen-displacing gas from a reservoir.
- 38. (New) Inerting method in accordance with Claim 24 in which an oxygen-displacing gas is made available by means of a production system.
- 39. (New) Inerting method in accordance with Claim 24, wherein an oxygen-displacing gas for lowering said oxygen content to the specific inerting level is provided from a reservoir and the oxygen-displacing gas to keep the inerting level at said re-ignition prevention level (R) is provided from a production system.
- 40. (New) Inerting method in accordance with Claim 24, wherein said re-ignition prevention level (R) is determined by taking into account a characteristic fire load of the target area, especially dependent on a material present within the target area.

- 41. (New) Inerting method in accordance with Claim 24, wherein said re-ignition prevention level (R) is determined by taking into account any given equipment and/or machines present within the target area and their operating states.
- 42. (New) Inerting method in accordance with Claim 24, wherein any given equipment and/or machines present within the target area are brought into a pre-defined operational state prior to lowering said oxygen content to said specific inerting level.
- 43. (New) Inerting method in accordance with Claim 24 in which the lowering of said oxygen content in the target room begins at Time t<sub>0</sub> of an early fire detection.